

REMARKS

In reply to the office action of September 21, 2004, please consider the following remarks. Claims 1, 4, 21, 24, and 48 are amended, and claims 2, 3, 18, 19, 22, 23, and 40-46 are cancelled herewith. Claims 1, 3-17, 21, 24-39, and 48 are pending and under examination.

The pending claims recite personal care products and methods of making the same. The personal care products include a handle having a grip. The grip includes a core and a sheath surrounding the core where the sheath has a hardness greater than the core.

Claims 1-6, 17, 21-26, 37-39, and 48 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,555,584 to Moore, III *et al.* ("Moore"). Claims 1-6, 17, 21-26, 37-39, and 48, as amended, all recite a grip including an elastomeric core, wherein the elastomeric core is a thermoplastic elastomer. The thermoplastic elastomer softens or melts when heated and hardens when cooled.

Moore does not disclose a grip including a core that is a thermoplastic elastomer as recited in the pending claims. Instead, Moore discloses a core including an elastomeric material that is a thermoset material. The thermoset material requires a step to cure the material. (See Col. 15, lines 9-14 "After impression, the body part is removed from the gel pad and the gel pad, either by itself or attached to the handle is put into the microwave and/or convection oven and heated to set the gel material." *Emphasis added.*) Unlike thermoset materials, thermoplastic materials do not require a setting step (e.g., a cross-linking step) to harden the material; rather the thermoplastic material hardens upon cooling. Because Moore does not disclose a thermoplastic elastomer core as recited in the pending claims, Applicants request that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 7-16 and 27-36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Moore. As with claims 1-6, 17, 21-26, 37-39, and 48 discussed above, claims 7-16 and 27-36 all recite an elastomeric core that is a thermoplastic elastomer. As discussed above, Moore does not disclose a core that is a thermoplastic elastomer. Moreover, Moore does not suggest such a core. Without such a suggestion, Applicants request that the rejection be withdrawn.

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Serial No. : 09/977,629
Filed : October 15, 2001
Page : 8 of 8

Attorney's Docket No.: 00216-551001 / OB-199

Claims 44-46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No.4,128,963 to Dano ("Dano"). Claims 44-46 are cancelled herewith, so the rejection should be withdrawn.

Enclosed is a petition for extension of time along with a check for the required fee.
Please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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